



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

I got my life back... RE: HB 5440

Almost all my life I have been struggling with being a border line Diabetic. I watched and cared for my Dad for years who had diabetes. He was on Insulin. I never wanted to be on Insulin. I helped my dad with his shots and it was always painful for me. He got use to them. As I got older I needed to do something so I would not have to give myself shots. I have been on medication as long as I could remember. I tried every diet possible to lose weight nothing worked. Even my Doctor would give me diets to try but to no avail...until this year.

In Feb, I had lost 10 pounds and I wanted to lose more but did not know what to do. My sister Beth joined the YMCA and she enjoyed going and had participated in a few of their programs. She had told me about the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program and suggested I try it. So I called and spoke to Lisa O'Connor the Program Coordinator and we made an appointment to discuss the program. That day I also joined the YMCA, and so glad I did. I started the program in April.

The program consists of a weekly 16 week sessions and a 6 month monthly sessions. We meet as a group for 1 hour and it is the best hour I have ever spent. There were 8 in my group, each had their own story and came from all walks of life.

Each week we get weighed in. We are also given a binder where each we receive a new topic and work to do. We are also asked to keep a daily tracker (track the food we eat each day). We calculated our weight loss goal which was to lose 7% body weight. My goal was to lose 20 pounds.

We also learned how to read labels. Never thought I would read labels but now I do. Did I mention that this is not a diet but a different way of eating? It is portion control and watching your fat intake. It is easy as that. On a package of pretzels for example, it will tell you how many pretzels you can eat per serving. So what I would do is count out 16 pretzels and put them in a baggie and then I knew that is all I could have. That suggestion came from a group member. It works. After a while I knew how much I was supposed to have without measuring. I live alone and sometimes it is hard because you don't feel like cooking something for just yourself, but now I love it. I prepare my food for the week on my days off so all I have to do is heat it up when I get home.

My downfall is ice cream and I still have it just in smaller portions. I do not deprive myself of anything just control the portions. I have also learned from the group after sharing about my love of ice cream that there are different kinds of ice cream with lower fat. Now I eat frozen yogurt, but still have my ice cream every now and then. I really enjoyed our group; we all shared our ups and downs and learned from each other.

The best support came from the group if you had a bad week. We would discuss and try to figure out what you could have done differently. It is all about balance; balancing your food, your exercise and your life. It is that simple. I am on the maintenance program now and still tracking my food daily. It is a regular routine for me now. My goal is another 30 pounds by February 2016.

The best part of the program is that it works if you work it. The support you get from Lisa and other members of the Y is amazing. I saved the BEST news for last. In August my Doctor took me off my medications. It was the happiest day I have had in a long time.



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DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Diabetes Prevention Program sponsored by the Western CT YMCA in Brookfield is a life changer. The program teaches you to set and achieve goals for weight reduction and exercise. The premise that diet and exercise are what is required for healthy lifestyle are proven with profound effect for those who diligently practice what is being taught during the 16 week sessions and carrying on after that. We learned the multiplying effect of a restricted fat diet. We learned how to read and interpret food labels. We learned about portion control and how to layout a healthy meal on a plate. Most importantly we developed a habit of tracking what we eat and how much we exercise. We also learned about motivational tools and techniques although for me preventing Diabetes is all the motivation required. Since this program is focused on preventing this disease there is a sense of urgency associated with it as well.

Another important factor is that the small group that participated helped and supported each other in way that was beneficial and motivational. Each person contributed in their own way on how to approach a situation or problem and how to resolve it. We learned a valuable lesson that if you get off track for a day or two it is no big deal. Just pick up where you left off and compensate accordingly. The weekly and monthly interaction with our lifestyle coach helped to get us and keep us on track until the habits were developed and ingrained.

Personally, the habits that I learned along with the knowledge I gained about a healthy lifestyle will be with me the rest of my life. The motivation is easy now because we worked very hard to get to this point and don't want to waste the effort that we have made. I enjoy exercising again and challenging myself physically which I haven't done in years. This is best investment I have ever made in myself.